

APPENDIX

REFERENCE MATERIALS & RESOURCES

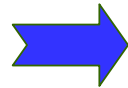
This section contains reference materials and resources to support the development of your school improvement plan.

- I. Useful websites
 - a. www.paayp.com
 - b. pssa.emetric.net
 - c. www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t (PVAAS link is in the left column)
 - d. www.pde.state.pa.us
 - e. www.cddre.org/Services/4Sight.cfm (4Sight link is in the left column)
 - f. www.pattan.k12.pa.us
- II. What is a “root cause”?
- III. Supplementary Guiding Questions for clarifying underlying causes of the current state of student achievement
 - a. Specific to the 6 Components of a Standards-aligned instructional system
 - b. Specific to content area (e.g., Mathematics, Reading)
 - c. Specific to a student subgroup (e.g., IEP, economically disadvantaged, ESL)
- IV. NCLB 2004-2014 *Adequate Yearly Progress* improvement targets – Reading and Mathematics
- V. What’s Important & What Works: High-leverage Practices for PreK-12
- VI. Guiding Questions for Clarifying Shared Values, Vision and Mission

What is a 'Root Cause'?

"The deepest underlying cause, or causes, of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if dissolved, would result in elimination, or substantial reduction, of the symptom."

Ammerman has identified **three criteria** to determine if each identified cause is a root cause or if it is a contributing cause.



1. **Would the problem have occurred if the cause had not been present?**
2. **Will the problem reoccur as the result of the same cause if the cause is corrected or dissolved?**
3. **Will correction or dissolution of the cause lead to similar events?**

If **no**, then it is a **root cause**
If **yes**, then it is a **contributing cause**

*Adapted from [Root Cause Analysis](#) by Paul G. Preuss (p.9-14)

GUIDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE 6 COMPONENTS OF A STANDARDS-ALIGNED INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM

<p style="text-align: center;">CLEAR STANDARDS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent has your district clearly articulated an instructional roadmap that is aligned to state standards and assessments, and demands rigor and high standards for student achievement? 2. Does the written curriculum ("planned instruction") make clear the relationship between the targeted academic standards, instructional objectives, content, materials, activities, and estimated instructional time to be devoted to achieving the academic standards? 3. Are standards and assessment anchors clearly addressed and assessed in all areas of the curriculum? 4. To what extent are the guidelines (standards) for student and staff behavior clearly defined and consistently reinforced by everyone? 	<p style="text-align: center;">FAIR ASSESSMENTS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are assessments aligned to PSSA and the adopted curriculum? How close is the alignment among state, district, grade level, and classroom assessments? 2. To what extent does your district use periodic local assessments to monitor student and school progress towards well-defined benchmarks? 3. How do you use the data from the formative assessments to diagnose the effectiveness of instruction <u>and</u> to define professional development priorities on a continuous basis? 4. To what extent does your district have a system to collect, analyze and disseminate data efficiently and effectively for use by school leaders/teams?
<p style="text-align: center;">STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do all students have access to challenging curriculum that demands they meet high standards? 2. Is your curriculum mapped to state academic standards, eligible content and assessment anchors (or other standards-aligned benchmark assessments)? 3. Does the written curriculum indicate estimated time to be allocated to targeted area of instruction? 4. To what extent are parents familiar with their student's learning goals? 5. Does planned curriculum and instruction indicate modifications and accommodations that are appropriate to the content/skills targeted? Are the goals and objectives in student IEPs based on specific academic standards and state assessment? 	<p style="text-align: center;">INSTRUCTION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent do teachers connect their instruction to written district curricula, Pennsylvania Academic Standards, and the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content? 2. How consistent are instructional practices from classroom-to-classroom? Grade-to-grade? Subject-to subject? And school wide? 3. To what extent are student grouping, use of instructional time, and instructional strategies differentiated for and responsive to student needs? 4. To what extent do teachers develop multiple and varied assessments of student learning aligned with instructional goals? 5. To what extent are the academic and social expectations clearly understood by teachers, staff and students?
<p style="text-align: center;">INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS & RESOURCES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent do instructional materials and resources address and provide ample practice with the highest-priority standards? 2. To what extent are materials and resources organized in a logical, sequential way; progress from level to level; and demonstrate relationships among fundamental concepts and skills? 3. To what extent do materials and resources accommodate diverse levels of student motivation, performance and educational needs? 4. To what extent do materials and resources provide specific recommendations for special-needs students? 	<p style="text-align: center;">INTERVENTIONS ("Safety Nets")</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the availability of intervention programs for 'struggling' students or subgroups? Are such programs staffed by people with the knowledge and skills to <u>accelerate</u> student learning? 2. To what extent are interventions aligned with the regular instructional program? 3. To what extent do classroom teachers and individuals providing interventions collaborate regarding student needs and academic progress? 4. To what extent is there a coherent system for timely data collection, analysis and feedback to teachers and parents?

GUIDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO STUDENT SUBGROUPS

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

1. Do students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum and appropriate general education classes?
2. Does the school use *Response to Intervention* to determine eligibility for Special Education services? Are early-intervention services available and appropriate?
3. Are there adequate and appropriate resources (i.e. manipulatives, workbooks, white boards, assistive devices) for students and teachers?
4. Does professional development for teachers include strategies for tailoring curriculum and instruction to student needs, in ways that accelerate student progress towards state standards and assessments?
5. To what extent are administrators knowledgeable about effective instructional strategies for special education students, and create a coherent program based on proven instructional strategies?

ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

1. Do teachers and staff hold all students to the same high expectations and academic standards? Are those expectations clearly communicated to and embraced by parents/community?
2. Are resources (teachers, materials, interventions, etc.) equitably allocated in ways that enhance “opportunity to learn” for economically disadvantaged students?
3. Are instructional strategies based on proven approaches for economically disadvantaged students? Are instructional interventions differentiated to build conceptual frameworks for students?
4. Does professional development for teachers include strategies for tailoring curriculum and instruction to student needs, in ways that accelerate student progress towards state standards and assessments?
5. To what extent are administrators knowledgeable about effective instructional strategies for economically disadvantaged students and use knowledge to create a coherent program based on proven instructional strategies?

ETHNICALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS

1. Does the school model a commitment to high expectations for all students, equal opportunities for meeting high academic standards, and culturally responsive practices?
2. Do students from ethnically diverse backgrounds have access to challenging, on-standard, rigorous curriculum?
3. Does the school provide timely and differentiated intervention for students “at risk” of falling behind? Do such interventions address the socio-emotional needs of students?
4. Does professional development for teachers include strategies for tailoring curriculum and instruction to student needs, in ways that accelerate student progress towards state standards and assessments?
5. To what extent are administrators knowledgeable about effective instructional strategies for ethnically diverse students, and create a coherent program based on proven instructional strategies?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (“ESL”) **

1. To what extent do teachers use instructional group activities in which students and teachers work together to create a product or idea?
2. To what extent do teachers apply literacy strategies and develop language competence in all subject areas?
3. To what extent do teachers contextualize teaching and curriculum in students’ existing experiences in home, community and school?
4. To what extent do teachers maintain challenging standards for student performance, and design activities to advance understanding to more complex levels?
5. To what extent do you instruct through teacher-to-student dialogue (“instructional conversations”), rather than lecture?

** Adapted from *The Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy* by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence

GUIDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO READING/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS and MATHEMATICS

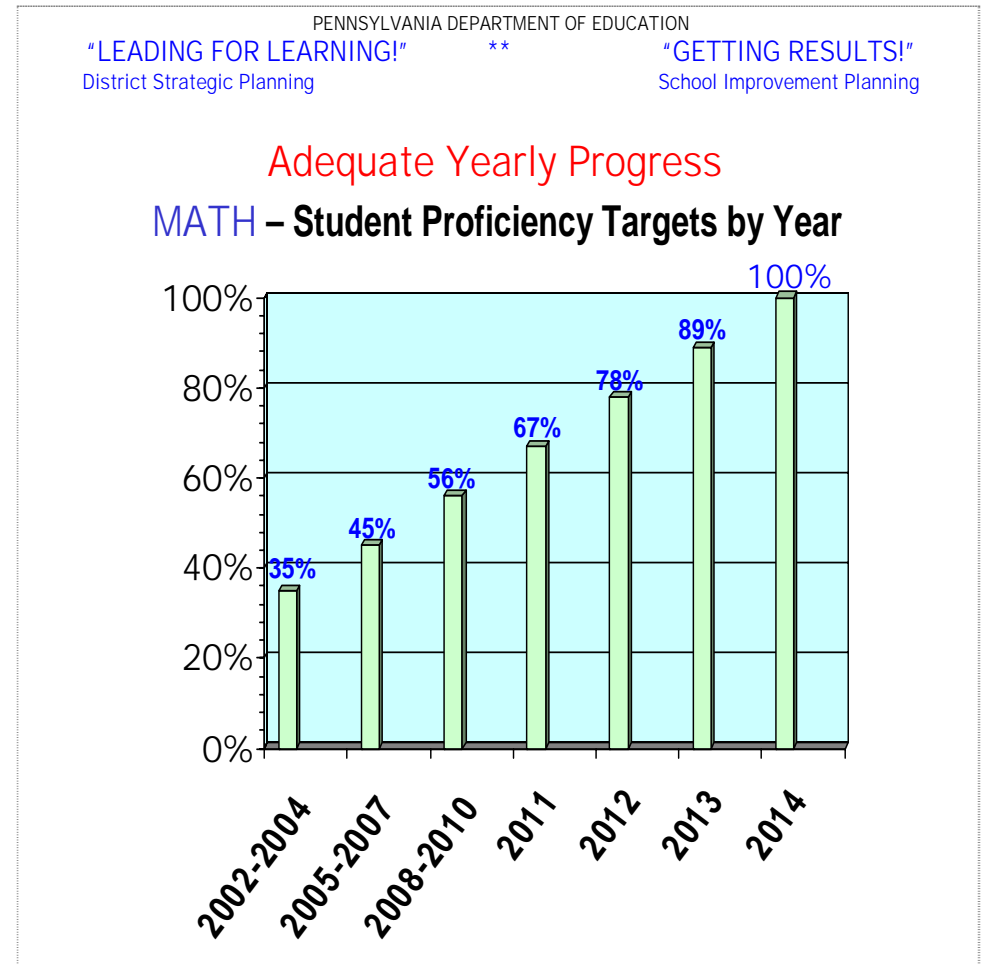
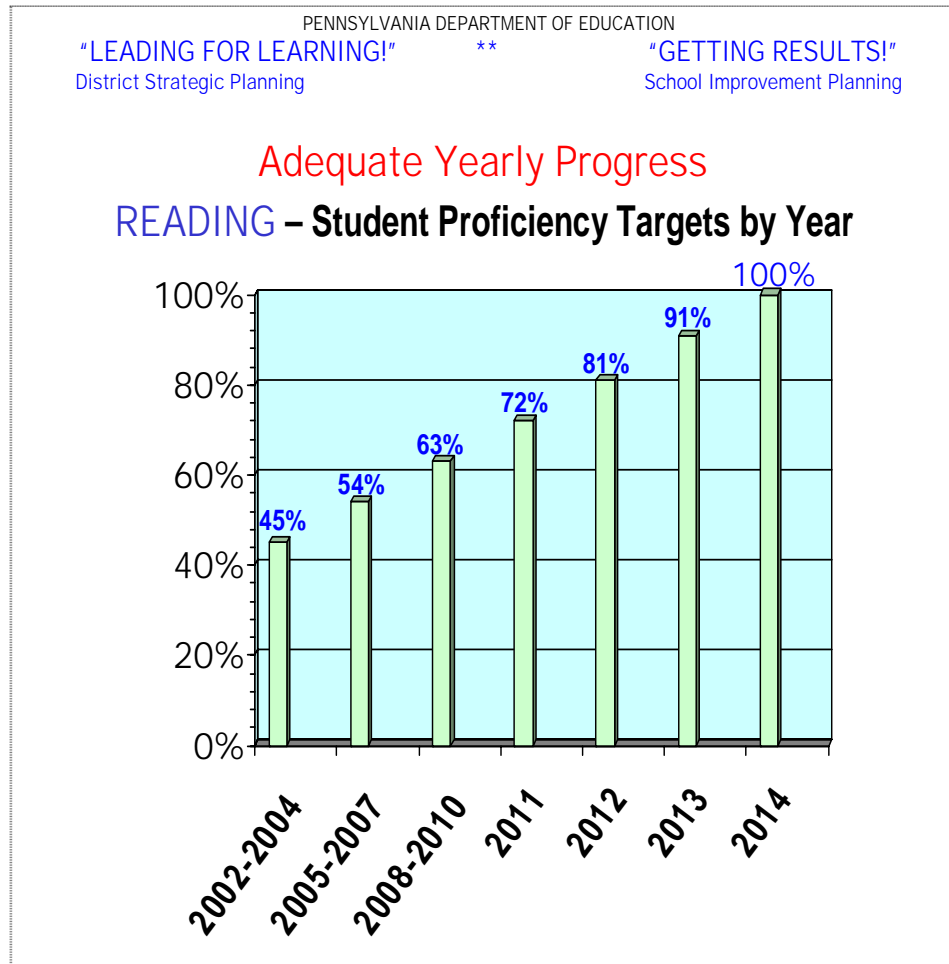
READING / ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Are teachers familiar with the state and district standards for Reading / English language arts?
2. To what extent are formative assessments of student progress aligned with instruction and curriculum objectives, as well as state standards and assessments?
3. To what extent do you use different types of assessments before, during and after instruction to provide timely data for adjusting instructional programs to meet students' level of mastery?
4. To what extent is the Reading/English language arts program comprehensive and balanced, with curriculum and instruction differentiated according to the assessed needs of students?
5. How well do assessment tools diagnose specific instructional needs, in order to inform instructional support and selection of age-/level-appropriate materials?
6. Are students with special learning needs provided additional instructional time and support – within the school day, before school, after school and during intersession periods?
7. Do instructional materials prioritize and sequence skills and strategies in a logical, coherent manner? Do they demonstrate interrelationships among fundamental reading/language arts skills?
8. How well do teachers manage whole-class and small-group lessons and other types of student groupings?
9. To what extent does the school promote reading/literacy for/through parents and community partners?
10. Does professional development for teachers include strategies for tailoring curriculum and instruction to student needs, in ways that accelerate student progress towards state standards and assessments?

MATHEMATICS

1. Is the adopted Mathematics curriculum aligned with state standards (especially the Pennsylvania eligible content and assessment anchors)?
2. To what extent is assessment aligned with and a guide for instruction?
3. To what extent do teachers possess an in-depth knowledge of the state standards, and able to select research-based instructional strategies that are developmentally appropriate for their students?
4. To what extent do instructional materials emphasize the highest-priority standards (eligible content and assessment anchors)?
5. How well do instructional resources accommodate the instructional needs of diverse students within the classroom and across the school?
6. How well do teacher professional development programs address teachers' own mathematics competence, and offer pedagogical tools appropriate to the needs of teachers and their students?
7. How well are intervention programs aligned with regular classroom curriculum and instruction?
8. How well do teachers manage whole-class and small-group lessons and other types of student groupings?
9. To what extent does the school promote reading/literacy for/through parents and community partners?
10. Does professional development for teachers include strategies for tailoring curriculum and instruction to student needs, in ways that accelerate student progress towards state standards and assessments?

PENNSYLVANIA'S STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IMPROVEMENT TARGETS (ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS PER NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND LAW)



What's Important & What Works: High-leverage Practices for PreK-12

2. QUALITY LEADERSHIP

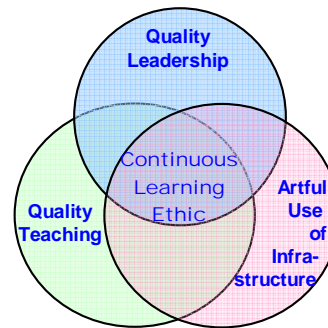
In every school and school system ...

- 2.1 Strong and capable instructional leadership team
- 2.2 Unrelenting focus on evidence-based teaching-&-learning
- 2.3 Culture of trust, continuous improvement and accountability for performance

1. QUALITY TEACHING

In every classroom and every school ...

- 1.1 A qualified, effective teacher
- 1.2 Rigorous curriculum, reliable assessments and standards-aligned instructional materials
- 1.3 Evidence-based instruction for all, with targeted assistance for 'struggling' students, subgroups and staff



3. ARTFUL USE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

In every school and school system ...

- 3.1 Authentic relationships with families, community, business and higher education
- 3.2 Strategic alignment & utilization of staff, facilities, time, fiscal resources and technology
- 3.3 Intensive supports for 'struggling' districts, schools and teams

4. CONTINUOUS LEARNING ETHIC

In every school and school system ...

- 4.1 Culture of evidence-based collaborative practice
- 4.2 Culture of continuous professional learning
- 4.3 Culture of collective professional accountability

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CLARIFYING SHARED VALUES, VISION and MISSION

SHARED VALUES (or Core Beliefs)

Consider the following *Guiding Questions* as you reflect on your current set of shared values (core beliefs) or as you develop new ones. Through discussion and involvement of all stakeholders, strive for school-wide consensus on the following key questions.

1. Regarding expectations for student learning*

- ☐ Can all students really learn?
- ☐ What *exactly* do we expect all students to learn?
- ☐ How will we respond when all of them do not learn it?

2. Regarding expectations for professional practice

- ☐ What standards will we hold ourselves to relative to the quality of our instructional practices?
- ☐ What are our expectations regarding professional collaboration and continuous learning?
- ☐ How will we ensure internal accountability within our professional community?

3. Regarding relationships among stakeholders

- ☐ What values will guide/ground conduct and relationships among stakeholders in our learning community – student-to-student; student-to-staff; staff-to-staff; staff-to-parents/families; school-to-community.
- ☐ How must our shared values change to reflect the culture we want and the results we desire for students?

MISSION (or Purpose)

The mission is the statement of your school's essential purpose – *its reason for being*. The mission gives a *shared meaning* to the work of the school. A good mission is a driving force for productive change – it is a declarative statement of “what we have come together to experience and to accomplish,” consistent with the school's shared values.

As you reflect on your school's mission, consider the following:

- ☐ What does your school need to be like or be about in order for you yourself to find *personal meaning* in its mission and *personal alignment* with its goals?
- ☐ Does our mission promote student achievement and/or excellence in educational practice?

VISION

Your school's vision is a clear, compelling ‘picture’ of the desired state; it is an image of what your school will be like when you are *being your best*. In that sense, the vision sets the “standards” for action and performance.

Consider these points relative to your school's vision:

- ☐ Does our vision reflect strong results for all students?
- ☐ Does our vision honor quality professional practices?
- ☐ Is our vision clear about the standards and expectations for all?